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EUROPEAN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEW EUROPE: IS NATO IRRELEVANT?

Recent events, including the unification of Germany, collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the cold war, the Maastricht treaty, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), etc., all appear on the surface to be leading to peace and stability in the "New Europe." In light of these historic events and apparent new world order, there are many who now question the need for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and are calling for the creation of new security arrangements with new leadership roles. My thesis is that NATO, under United States leadership, will continue in its present form to be the cornerstone of stability, security and dialogue in the "New Europe" well into the next century. My arguments will center on the following assertions:

- 1) The threat, both conventional and nuclear, continues to exist.
- 2) Current European security organizations, other than NATO, have proven ineffective in capability and resolve.
- 3) NATO is proven effective and will continue to be an indispensable forum.
- 4) Continued U.S. presence in Europe is desired.
- 5) NATO remains relevant and in the national interest.

THE THREAT CONTINUES TO EXIST

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The signing of the CFE Treaty in Paris in November 1990 was a historic event that will dramatically reduce conventional forces in Europe. Signatories included the 16 NATO members, six Warsaw Pact nations plus 12 neutrals. The treaty limits NATO and former Warsaw Pact to 20,000 tanks, 20,000 artillery pieces, 30,000 armored combat vehicles, 6,800 combat aircraft and 2,000 attack helicopters between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains.¹ This is not an insignificant force, and with the political instability and economic turmoil that pervades throughout the newly organized Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), must not be discounted. The same concern applies in the nuclear arms areas. In spite of the progress being made in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II), 4 of 15 CIS states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine) still possess nuclear weapons, about 5000 total. The loss of central control, nuclear terrorism or blackmail, or possible sale of nuclear weapons or technology to Third World countries for economic reasons remains a distinct possibility.

Even more likely, as threatened in the former Yugoslavia, and expressed by Francois Heisbourg: "Civil war or catastrophic break-up or breakdown could lead to irrational flare-ups of external aggressiveness or border disputes between ex-Soviet Republics and their western neighbors as a spin-off from internal turmoil."² An

¹ William Drozak, "Arms Treaty, Paris Meeting Seal Conclusion of Cold War," Washington Post, 19 Nov 90.

² Francois Heisbourg, "From a Common European House to a European Security System." Gregory F. Treverton (ed.) The Shape of the New Europe. (NY:Council on Foreign Relations, 1992): 42.

example of just how volatile events are, it was recently reported that Russia threatened to cut off natural gas unless the Ukrainians paid nearly \$300 million for previous deliveries. As the Ukraine is already suffering a winter fuel crisis, this could increase already existing tensions between the two most powerful former Soviet republics, already at odds over control of nuclear weapons, payment of the foreign Soviet debt, and ownership of the Black Sea Fleet.³ The presence of significant conventional and nuclear arms coupled with political and economic instability in Eastern Europe continues to threaten the peace and stability of the region. Existing or planned European security structures can not provide the secure deterrence and guarantees that have existed with NATO since its birth in 1947.

NON-NATO SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS INEFFECTIVE/LACK RESOLVE

As the U.S. downsizes and reduces its force presence in Europe, we would expect the existing and future European security organizations (Western European Union (WEU), European Community(EC)) to take on an increasing leadership and responsibility role towards stability in the region. But as has been disappointingly illustrated in the Gulf War and in the crisis in Somalia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, those organizations lack the organization and resolve or legal and political conformity to provide effective response or even participation in crisis. Within

³ "Russia threatens fuel cutoff to Ukraine," ITAR-Tass news agency, 21 Feb 93, Patriot News: A-16.

the WEU, France seems willing to get involved but lacks agreement to subordinate their forces. At the outset of the civil war in Bosnia, they displayed a lack of resolve to even consider the former Yugoslavia as being in their vital interests. I believe their current involvement was coerced by adverse world opinion. In the German case, they will be totally ineffective as long as their constitution forbids the positioning of combat troops outside NATO.

For the EC, the Maastricht Treaty locks down the road towards political unity and common security, but the requirement for unanimity will constrain action on hard issues. In Great Britain, they are hesitant to undermine NATO and jeopardize their special relationship as second in command.⁴ Their failure to ratify the Maastricht Treaty, in regards to the first stages of monetary union, may show questionable support in future security policy as well. The rest of the EC countries appear split, with Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece generally sharing French views, while Portugal, the Netherlands and Denmark usually side with Great Britain in preserving the primacy of NATO.⁵

As a final example of futility of action, the 52 nation forum of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the 32 Nation North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) last June could not agree unanimously even to support the concept of NATO

⁴Jenonne Walker. "Fact and Fiction About a European Security Identity and American interests," Occasional Paper. The Atlantic Council (April 1992): 8

⁵ Ibid. 8.

peace keeping missions.⁶ If these organizations can't reach consensus on a concept, how effective can they be when it comes to a vote of resolve and the committing of resources, including manpower, in crisis? So far, these existing and emerging security organizations, though important as a means of dialogue, lack the means, resolve and unanimity to be effective at least for the foreseeable future. NATO, on the other hand, is a proven entity with the foundations, structure, means and flexibility to accommodate the new world order.

NATO: PROVEN EFFECTIVE, INDISPENSABLE

NATO has the advantage over all of the new or proposed European security organizations: it exists and has been an unprecedented success for over 45 years. It is in good health, and as Philip Zelikow writes: "the major European powers are all represented in NATO and ...NATO remains a far more capable institution for organizing forces and orchestrating military planning."⁷ The infrastructure of NATO is already in place, with a significant contribution provided by the U.S. These were summarized recently by a high ranking U.S. military NATO representative and included: reaction forces, main defense, augmentation forces, and nuclear forces; air and naval lift; and high tech capabilities including intelligence, satellite

⁶ Craig R. Whitney, "Europeans Agree to Honor Arms Pact by Old Blocs," *The New York Times International*, 6 June 92.

⁷ Philip Zelikow, "The New Concert of Europe." *Survival* (Summer 1992): 23

communications, missile defense, strategic and tactical reconnaissance, cruise missiles, special warfare and worldwide maritime capability. Who can afford to recreate these required capabilities, especially at a time when many economies are being forced to downsize their military, including Germany (40%) ⁸, Belgium (50%) ⁹, the Dutch and U.S.?

Besides the U.S. investment in the NATO, its success leans heavily on U.S. leadership, with its political will, resolve and success in building a coalition, as was impressively demonstrated during the Gulf War. Plus NATO provides a concrete U.S. guarantee of security and a nuclear umbrella for Western Europe.

NATO is also providing the foundation for dialogue and cooperation with the former Warsaw Pact countries. In the July 1990 London Declaration, former adversaries were invited to establish diplomatic liaison missions at NATO. ¹⁰ This was followed up in the Rome Summit of November 1990 with the development of the strategic concept for the alliance and dialogue with the eastern bloc countries. In a recent visit to Moscow, NATO commander, General Shalikashvili, offered the possibility of joint military exercises, junior officer exchanges and peacekeeping training between NATO and Russian forces to foster close

⁸ Marc Fisher, "Kohl Plans Cut in German Forces," Washington Post, 6 Feb 93.

⁹ AP, "Belgium to Slash Spending on Defense to Pare Deficit," Wall Street Journal, Feb 1, 1993: 6

¹⁰ Philip Zelikow, "The New Concert of Europe," Survival (Summer 1992): 22.

cooperation and partnership.¹¹ This dialogue has even extended to a request from Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev to NATO Secretary General Woerner for NATO help in training its new armed forces.¹² The credibility and existing structure of NATO is making this dialogue possible.

EUROPE WANTS NATO AND CONTINUED U.S. PRESENCE

After listening to several guest speakers and lecturers throughout the last six months, I believe the desire for NATO and continued U.S. presence in Western Europe is almost unanimous. As Jenonne Walker wrote, "No West European government wants to scrap NATO or entirely to dispense with the troop presence that gives credence to America's security guarantee."¹³ The German people have learned harsh lessons from two world wars and seen 45 years of peace and U.S. presence. They want our continued military presence, and NATO provides the means. As German Defense Minister Volker Ruehe was recently quoted: U.S. troops must be considered "a major and indispensable player in... European security culture." He considers the U.S. a player in everyday political and security life in Europe.¹⁴ Although the French would rather be in the

¹¹ "Russia, NATO plan to join on projects," Sunday Patriot News, Harrisburg, Pa., 31 Jan 1993. A-15.

¹²Rueter, "Kazakhstan Wants Nato Help," Early Bird, 2 Feb 1993.

¹³ Jenonne Walker, "Fact and Fiction About a European Security Identity and American Interests," Occasional Paper. The Atlantic Council (April 1992): 3.

¹⁴ AP, "U.S. Part of European Security", Early Bird, 18 Feb 1993.

leadership role, even they are not anxious to see our presence leave in the now unified Germany. According to a recent Washington Post article, Germany wants us to keep at least 100,000 troops in Germany to demonstrate that Washington still considers its forces essential to European defense.¹⁵ With our budget cuts, it probably will not be that many. In any case, NATO continues to ensure Western European security, and I feel our troop presence insures our continued leadership role in NATO.

NATO REMAINS RELEVANT

The end of the cold war is certainly causing a change in focus of roles and missions and even organization within NATO. Peacemaking and peacekeeping head the list of emerging new missions, as NATO and the WEU debate their roles and interests in the future of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Other organizations may evolve as the countries of the CIS and other nations become established in greater European security organizations, but only after economic and political stability is achieved. But in the uncertainty of the future, the security needs of Western Europe and the national security interests of the United States will continue to be met, for the foreseeable future, within the framework and basic organization of NATO as it exists today.

¹⁵ Mare Fisher, Washington Post, 6 Feb 1993.